



**Representative Office of Japan  
to the Palestinian Authority**

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**PRESS RELEASE**

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Statement by the Minister for Foreign Affairs on the Situation in the Gaza Strip

1. The Government of Japan welcomes the declaration of a ceasefire by Hamas and other Palestinian militants following the Israel's declaration. Japan considers that this is a necessary step for preventing further civilian casualties.
2. Japan expresses its condolences to the bereaved families as well as its deepest sympathy for the people who have been injured in a series of events in and around the Gaza Strip.
3. Japan urges both sides to exercise their utmost self-restraint in order to keep this ceasefire, and strongly hopes that a permanent ceasefire will be achieved as soon as possible through cooperation of relevant parties including, inter alia, Egypt's mediation efforts. Japan also expects that, in response to the announcement by Prime Minister Mr. Ehud Olmert, relevant parties will actively pursue their efforts to realize an early withdrawal of the Israeli forces from the Gaza Strip and to improve the humanitarian situation through such measures as the opening of the crossing points.
4. In order to help stabilize the situation, Japan will keep in close contact with the relevant parties, and will actively participate in its humanitarian and reconstruction efforts in close coordination with Israel and the Palestinian Authority. Japan will also continue to make its utmost effort to contribute to the advancement of the Middle East Peace Process.

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